584 square ; they sit down in the shade. They are asked : " What do you want ? " " We have come to see the girls ", they answer bluntly. And the reply is : " All right. Look at them. "

584 Of course the girls do their very best to be as pleasing as possible, as the mother has told them that these are suitors.
292 The suitor is easily known by his special attire, a belt of skins
361 either of leopard or tiger-cat. He goes from one yard to the other, and talks with the cooks, inquiring their names, and looking at them as, with vigourous and graceful movements of the body, they crush the mealies in their mortar. If the seekers find what they want, they return home, if not, they go to the next hamlet. (Let us say here that each village consists of not more than six to twelve huts built in a circle, leaving a central circular place, the shaded " square ", of which the oxen kraal occupies the middle.) (See Part II.)

584 When he is satisfied, the suitor goes home and says to his parents : "So and so pleases me. Go and woo her. (Ku buta)." Then a middle aged man of the village is sent to the parents of the young girl. He is received in the father's hut and, with all the circumlocutions required by etiquette, he discharges his errand. The girl is called and told that the visitor who came the other day has chosen her ; she is asked if she also loves him (or if she wants him... for there is only one word in Ronga to express these two kindred notions, ku randja). " Oh! is it the one who looked thus and so and who wore this and that ? Yes, I consent to accept (to eat) the money out of his hands (ku da bukosi ku yene). " If she does not care for him, she will declare it quite as plainly : the suitor will have to seek elsewhere. It is a fact worth noting that, amongst these so-called savages, a father very seldom obliges his daughter to accept a husband whom she dislikes, except in the case of debt. If the matter is arranged to the satisfaction of all parties the buta (1) or betrothal is concluded and the messenger is feasted, while he, on his part, gives a present (shihlengwe) to the girl's parents of the value of a hoe or ten

(1) *Buta* may be a factitive derivative of the verb *bula*, to speak: to cause somebody to speak, to give an answer.

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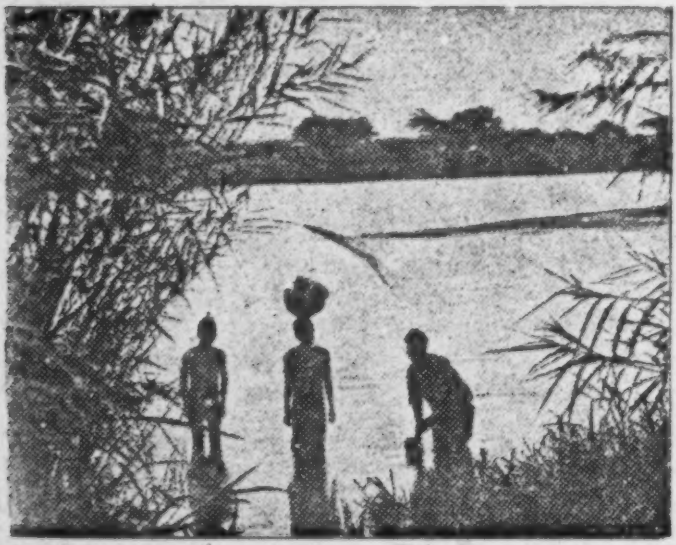
584 In fact this is exactly what the young men want, and the second night is spent like the first.

The third day they go away. All the young girls accompany them along the paths, for a long distance, and, when they part, boys and girls tie together the high standing grasses on the veldt (ku ba mafundju hi byanyi), a touching symbol of their loves! Seeing these knots during the whole season at a crossroads,



Phot. A. Borel

Drawing water from the Maputju river.

passers-by will know that lovers parted there. On taking leave, the young people arrange another meeting. The girls will go after a week or two to return the visit.

292 301 584 In fact, to the *tjekela* of the boys corresponds the *koroka* of the girls. " They make the betrothal visit to see the husband (ba ya ku koroken, ku ya bona nuna) ". They also put on their finest attire ; red and white cloth, in their curled hair a small crown of blue and red beads, looking really pretty, on ankles and wrists bracelets of twisted iron wire.

765 533 The other is a curious apostrophe to the wizards who were believed to have bewitched the deceased, and means : " Good bye, wizard! Good bye, wizard! You will kill people. You come to kill people, you come during the night. "

765 783 But the *closing day* arrives at last, the *day of the sprinkling* (shuba). When the grave-diggers have well perspired in their vapour bath, the doctor takes the pot in which the medicine is still boiling. All the women sit down with their children on their backs, the men stand in a line, holding their assagais and sticks in their hands. The doctor sprinkles his decoction over them all with a branch covered with leaves. The children cry because the burning drops hurt them. The women try to hide behind each other. The men gesticulate as if striking enemies with their assagais ; this is to show that their arms are strong and that they can now go to the war, as it would have been taboo for them to join the army before this purification had taken place. Should a man be absent from home, his sticks are also brought to the sprinkling to be purified (1). Then the doctor goes with his pot, sprinkling all the village, the huts, the doors, the backs of the roofs, the fence, the belongings of the deceased which are kept to be distributed amongst the heirs. After this operation, the village is pure as far as material things are concerned. The contamination which had fallen on all of them by reason of their owner's death is removed. Before the sprinkling it would have been dangerous to remove anything. Now if any one should have left anything in the kraal before the death, he can come and recover it. This is the act by which " the mourning is scattered " (hangalasa nkosi).

765 292 Visitors go home, having put on their *malopa*, if they are Ba-Ronga ; strings of milala palm leaves round their heads, their necks, arms, and legs, if they belong to Northern clans. The custom of wearing a white handkerchief round the head is spreading. If a goat is killed, every one wears a bracelet made of its skin round the wrist, and the widow and the principal grave-digger

(1) In the Northern clans, says Viguet, a little of this mixture is kept to sprinkle visitors during the following days, because " they are taboo for the things of the village, not having been cleansed : " (ba yila psa le mutin, hikuba a ba basiniwanga.)

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765 292 put strings, made from the same skin, over their breasts. The widow adds new strings when other goats are killed during the mourning visits which will take place later on, and until the adjudication of the inheritance. It is a sign that her husband is dead (a feliwile).

2) The Great Mourning in the Northern clans.

765 783 The foregoing is the sequence of the rites of the Great Mourning in the Ronga clans. In the Northern clans, according to Viguet, the same elements are found, but in another form.

825 278 As soon as the mourning lamentations begin, the grave-diggers send some men to fetch the *tinyele*, which are bits of skin taken from the soles of elephants' feet. These are burnt on charcoal, together with cocks' dung, and the mourners come and inhale the smoke with reeds, when they are tired of wailing. The *tinyele* are considered to be a powerful medicine. It is taboo to eat or even to snuff before having inhaled this smoke.

765 783 That first night, everyone sleeps in the open, and the grave-diggers are not allowed to use their mats. They must cut grass to cover them for fear that their impurity might contaminate the mats. As usual, sexual relations are suspended between married people, but the *bugango* is not taboo in the Northern clans, as girls (psigango) are not wives (basati). When, on the following days, visitors come to the mourning, they go straight to the grave with a small basket of mealies and spread them over it saying. "Go! Die! You have left us." This spreading of mealies is a *mhamba*, an offering. Then the doctor comes. It seems that his operations last only three days. There are no vapour baths properly speaking, but the doctor burns his powders together with bits of bark in broken pots, and all the mourners come and inhale the smoke through reeds, as they did on the first day.

The *purification of the food* is performed by a rite which corresponds with the *lumisa milomo* of the Rongas. The doctor

765 782 604 little of it into a glass and raises it to the lips of the old man. "He cuts his prayer" and while all the attention of the public is concentrated upon this act (which belongs also to the ritual, as the priest must be the first to partake of the offering), the wives of the batukulu rush towards the shoulders, lungs and hoofs of the goats and the bottle of wine, seize them and run away towards the west. They have stolen the meat of the sacrifice! At once all stand up and follow them laughing, shouting and pelting them with the *psanyi*, which they had kept for this purpose. The thieves hide themselves behind some bush and eat the meat. Uterine nephews are representatives of the gods, as we shall see later on, and they assert their right by stealing the offering and eating it up.

This ceremony is highly characteristic as it embodies some of the principal ideas of the Thongas in the domain of religion, social life and taboo. It was worth while describing it, and we shall refer to it later on, when dealing with sacrifices and the position of the uterine nephews in the family.

765 292 554 825 The crushing down of the hut is not performed in exactly the same manner amongst the Ba-Ronga. In the clans *South of the Bay*, they only *close* it (pfala yindlu). They dig holes in front of the door, into which they insert poles of the bush called *nhleha*, tying thorny branches horizontally to them. The shield of the deceased is placed against the door. The religious rite then takes place and from the skins of the sacrificed goats strips are cut, which the widows will have to wear *en bandoulière* during the following months of their widowhood. The astragalus bones are kept and hung round the neck. The gall-bladder is also preserved and fixed in the hair of the new master of the village as a sign of his new position.

765 596 In the *district of Makaneta*, on the estuary of the Nkomati, the ceremony comprises two successive acts. First there is also a *provisory closing* of the hut, which can take place one month after the death and is accompanied by the family gathering and the religious ceremony. One year later, when the inheritance is adjudicated, the hut is crushed down, but only if it belonged to a headman of the village and if the kraal is obliged to move in

783 765 575 787 of mourning women sitting on the main road, prudently stops and makes a long detour to avoid the place... What is done at this meeting ? One of the widows makes an incision with a knife or a bit of glass in the skin of the new member of the society, in the inguinal region on the left side, "where the husband was resting." If the blood flows freely, it is a good sign. The women are satisfied : they say there was a good understanding between husband and wife ; if the blood does not flow it is a bad omen. Then one of them lights a little fire with a handful of dry grass ; this grass has been torn from the roof of the deceased's hut. A little excrement from a cock (not a hen!) is then thrown into the fire, and the widow must expose both hands to the smoke. Afterwards she must extinguish the fire with her own water. Should she be unable to do this, it is a further proof that she has not been faithful to her husband and that she has killed him by her adulteries. These rites are very similar to the first circumcision rites, the incision performed recalling the ablation of the foreskin, and the exposure to the smoke, the jumping over the fire. These are great taboos. Evidently they are initiation rites, accompanying the passage from one condition to another. Why does the ceremony take place on the main road ? Because later on the contamination of death will attach itself to travellers passing that spot, and the mourners themselves will get rid of it in this way.

783 765 575 292 After that, the company returns home. The other widows take every bit of clothing from their companion, and tie a reed or a palm thread around her waist with some broad leaves attached to it. With this scanty garment, they bring her home. She walks surrounded by them. Someone warns the men to leave the road as they are not allowed to see the procession. They hide themselves in their huts. The widow is led to her hut, the hut of the great wife which has now been uncrowned. She must accomplish *the last crossing of the hut*. Entering through the door, she shouts loudly : "My husband! My husband! You have left me alone! What am I to do ?" Then she goes out, not by the door but by the hole which has been made in the wall to carry the corpse to the grave. Behind the hut her friends are waiting for her and give her back her old clothing, which has been

in the bandla, and it is strictly reserved for them. Women are allowed to penetrate into it only when they bring food. Boys must remove the ashes from the fireplace, not women. The *hubo*, on the contrary, is open to all. A shed is sometimes built on it to afford shelter during the rainy days. There are special acts always performed on the hubo : the cutting up (shindla), the slaughtering and butchery of animals and the feast of "eating the head." The head of any slaughtered ox belongs to the men, and they eat it together on the hubo (See letter C.). It is the business of the young men to keep the hubo clean, and they sometimes assemble to pull up the grass which may have grown on it. In former times it was taboo to come to the hubo with sandals. Sandals are used for hunting and must be taken off before entering the village.

Another place to which I have already alluded is the *bukwele*, the "place of jealousy," where angry co-wives insult each other! On our diagram it would be located between 5 and 4, for the wives of the headman.

The Thonga village, this closed circle of huts, is a living organism. All its members form a whole whose unity is remarkable. This common life never appears in a more striking form than at the evening meal. Let us look at our diagram. In every yard the mistress of the hut has cooked her mealies and her sauce in different pots, and, when the sun sets, she distributes the contents (phamela) in wooden or earthen plates. The largest is for the husband. He sits on the bandla with his companions, the other men of the village, and the youths waiting for the meal. All these plates, generally carried by small girls or boys, are brought from all sides to the men's gathering. All do not necessarily contain the ordinary mealies pap ; some are filled with manioc, some with sweet potatoes, etc. The men attack the first plate, all of them taking the food with their fingers. They pass on to the second and so on to the last. Meanwhile each mother has filled other smaller plates, one for the girls, one for the boys, one for herself. She has even sent to each of the other women of the village a little of her cooking, and the others have done the same to her ; so each member of the community, when

439 monopolise the retail trade throughout the country, and the
563 Natives are quite unable to meet this competition; they have consequently almost entirely given up all their earlier attempts at business transactions! (1)

167 A second reason why the trade of former days has almost
439 entirely disappeared is to be found in the *great economic changes* resulting from the fact that Lourenço Marques has become an important seaport, in close relation with the miners of Johannesburg who receive their supplies via Delagoa Bay. Thousands of Natives are employed in discharging the large steamers which arrive by hundreds in the roadstead. At this work a Native can earn fifteen shillings a week or more; in a short time he has made ample provision for the wants of his family and no longer finds it necessary to go to Bilene, to Zululand or Swaziland to make a living. The women too can make money by selling tomatoes and sweet potatoes to an ever increasing White population. All this is much easier

439 (1) On one occasion, in 1892, I made a list of various articles displayed for sale in and around a Banyan shop, in the district of Mahazule (to the North of Nondwane).
292 This is what Mr. Nala, a Hindu from Goa established for many years amongst the
765 Rongas, offered to the Natives living in the neighbourhood of his primitive store.

584 *Stuffs.* These are sold by measurement taken on the individual; say, by the *shikumba*, length of one arm, or by the *nkumba* or *bemba* (two arms), or by the *peça*, the entire piece, the equivalent of two bemba. The materials most in demand are called; *tingidao* (white), *mashita* (black with white stripes), *shilandana* (all red), *shinwakana* (red and black), *mempana* (a special red stuff worn as mourning) and *malopa* (a navy blue material still more frenquently worn as mourning). Besides these are *handkerchiefs* (minturu) of various colours, principally red, a large proportion coming from the manufacturers of East Switzerland; white *blankets (gampongo*, meaning snow), for three or four shillings; coloured blankets, thicker, varying from five to seven shillings; towels, called *thawula* (an adaptation of the English word) and even some articles of ready-made clothing such as *djansi* (overcoats) at fifteen shillings! Amongst the stuffs I would more particularly note the *gangisa ntombi*, that is "for use when courting the girls", dark blue with a pattern of white flowers.

439 *Beads.* There are at least a dozen kinds to be found at Nala's; djiridja (black) mbanda (white), shingazana, shimuzana, nkankana, habo, matshimbarole, bafa, tshambo.

Sundries. Rings, fish-hooks, buttons (masowa), thread, needles, snuff boxes to be worn in the ears (tinhlanga), knives, spoons, balls of string, padlocks (makandjate) with key attached; little chains, to be hung from the belt, which tinkle when walking; bracelets (busenga, ten for a shilling); wooden spoons, combs, coils of fine iron wire; skins; a large trap for catching hyenas or other wild animals; small brass petroleum lamps; sardines at sixpence a tin, English biscuits, and last but not least, a cask of German brandy diluted (tempora) with 50% of water! This would now be replaced by three casks of Vinho colonial, one of white wine, one of red wine and one of I do not know what colour!